DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 893 JC 970 477

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TITLE	Contribution of SMP Terbuka toward Lifelong Learning in Indonesia.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	13p.; In: Lifelong Learning: Policies, Practices, and Programs; see JC 970 458.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Cost Effectiveness; *Distance Education; Educational Opportunities; Foreign Countries; Inclusive Schools; Independent Study; *Lifelong Learning; Program Development; Program Implementation; *Secondary Education
IDENTIFIERS	*SMP Terbuka (Indonesia)

ABSTRACT

The Open Junior Secondary School, or "SMP Terbuka," was conceived in 1976 as a means of providing junior secondary school education through distance education delivery to disadvantaged students in Indonesia. Although different in structure, SMP Terbuka is part of Indonesia's formal educational system, and uses the same standard Junior Secondary School curricula and assessment criteria. Currently, large numbers of primary school students have geographic and socioeconomic constraints that deprive them from educational opportunities. SMP Terbuka makes further education accessible to these students through independent learning from printed modules, radio, and television, with limited face to face teacher interaction. The cost of this program is significantly lower than more formal schooling, with the same certification opportunities and learning outcomes. It is managed through a Directorate of General Secondary Education, and has rapidly grown from five locations in five provinces, to 956 locations in 27 provinces. The program is economically beneficial due to the development of human capital through vocational and technical education. Additional benefits include the cultivation of the concept of flexible learning among students, which is both independent and inclusive. SMP Terbuka represents an educational philosophy which supports lifelong learning, and which may serve as an example for other countries to follow. (YKH)

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Contribution of SMP Terbuka Toward Lifelong Learning in Indonesia

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In: Lifelong Learning: Policies, Practices, and Programs

JC 970 477

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Contribution of SMP Terbuka Toward Lifelong Learning in Indonesia

by Arief S. Sadiman and Rafael Rahardjo

The Open Junior Secondary School, or "SMP Terbuka", was developed as a pilot project intended to run from 1979 to 1984 and provide junior secondary school education through distance education delivery to students who might otherwise not have the opportunity to receive education beyond primary school. It is fast becoming a key component of the educational infrastructure, and will most certainly be a critical ingredient in the development of an overall system of lifelong learning in Indonesia. Originally operating in only five schools in five provinces, SMP Terbuka was first designed to help meet the shortfall predicted in the school building program. This original mandate was extended to 1989 at which time it was expected that the government would be able to provide the required additional school buildings and facilities. However, the pilot was so successful that SMP Terbuka has become an integral part of the government's plans to address the learning needs of approximately 6.2 million school age children by the year 2004/2005. SMP Terbuka has been charged with the education of 2.25 million of these children.

INTRODUCTION

Although different in structure, the Open Junior Secondary School SMP Terbuka is part of the formal educational system in Indonesia, and uses the same Junior Secondary School (SMP) curricula and assessment criteria in its programs as is used in standard programming. In the SMP Terbuka system, students convene for independent study in clusters of learning groups called "Tempat Kegiatan Belajar" (TKB), formed within the boundaries of the base school. This paper describes the development, structure and growth of the Open Junior Secondary School SMP Terbuka in Indonesia.

The approach of SMP Terbuka differs from that of its regular counterparts in that it handles the learning process of its students through distance and independent learning. It operates on the theory that for a desired learning behaviour to occur (result), certain strategies have to be applied (treatment) to a specific audience with certain characteristics (condition). This approach builds on the premise that when different treatments are applied to students in different conditions, equally successful results may occur.

SMP Terbuka is based on this last approach. It is for disadvantaged children (dif-

ferent conditions), who learn independently from printed modules, the main media for instruction, and with limited face to face teacher interaction (different treatment). This type of treatment is intended to yield the same or very similar results (same results).

Table 1

CONDITION	TREATMENT	RESULT
same	same	same
same	different	different
different	same	different
different	different	same

At the present time in Indonesia, large numbers of primary school students, particularly those faced with geographic and socioeconomic constraints, are currently deprived of educational opportunities. SMP Terbuka makes further education accessible to these students.

As Rumble (1986) points out, the significant advantages of distance education include reaching a large number of individuals who for a variety of reasons would not be able to attend classroom-based activities and providing flexible easy to use learning materials relatively cheaply given sufficient students in the system for economies of scale to be enjoyed. He further argues, however, that cost-effectiveness is not always an end in and of itself. Distance education may be the only practical way of reaching some target groups, and the cost of doing so may be a secondary consideration. This is the case in Indonesia.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

SMP Terbuka utilizes the same national curriculum as do the regular SMPs. In order to provide a reference and standard for the design and development of independent learning materials, this base curriculum has been elaborated into Basic Patterns of Learning and Teaching named "Pola Dasar Kegiatan Belajar Mengajar" (PDKBM). This has been further broken down into Basic Media Program Outlines, "Garis Besar Isi Program Media" (GBIPM).

The national curriculum, since the initiation of SMP Terbuka, has undergone several changes. Hence, materials and support programs for SMP Terbuka have been adjusted accordingly. For example, the first SMP Terbuka modules were based on the 1975 SMP curriculum and written by trained lecturers of the Institutes of Teacher's Education and Training (IKIP). Successive SMP curriculum changes took place in 1984 and in 1994. Pilot testing of module were conducted in Kalianda, one of the pilot schools located in Lampung, South Sumatra in January of 1992. With the introduction of the 1994 curriculum, revised learning materials, including radio and audio cassette modules, have been available since the 1994/95 school year.

The quarter semester system, adopted in 1994/95, requires four subjects for the Local School Final Examination (EBTA), and an additional six subjects for the State

Final Examination (EBTANAS). The first four include:

- Religion with five electives - Islam, Christian/Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, and Buddhism;
- Health and Sports;
- Arts and craftsmanship;
- Local content - local language, culture, arts, home industries and vocational skills.

Graduates of any recognized primary school, including the Islamic "Madrasah Ibtidaiyah" (MI), the Small Elementary School (SD Kecil) and the Community Elementary (SD Pamong), between the ages of 11 and 18, are eligible for admission to SMP Terbuka. Within the context of UBE, priority is given to school-age children between 13 and 15 in order to meet the projected demand for a technically trained workforce in the era of increased global competition. Students learn through specially structured distance learning packages utilizing self-instructional modules and small group learning. This is supplemented by radio broadcasts, cassettes, and slide and video programs. Unlike students in a regular SMP, students in SMP Terbuka spend most of their learning time in independent study at their TKB, supervised and guided by "Guru Pamong" (Teacher Aides). They are, however, required to attend weekly face-to-face interactions with their "Guru Bina" (Subject Teachers) to discuss their progress and address any problems that have arisen from their independent work. Graduates of this program receive the same certificate as graduates of the regular school stream, for they learn from the same curriculum and, most importantly, participate in the same national examination.

ADMINISTRATION

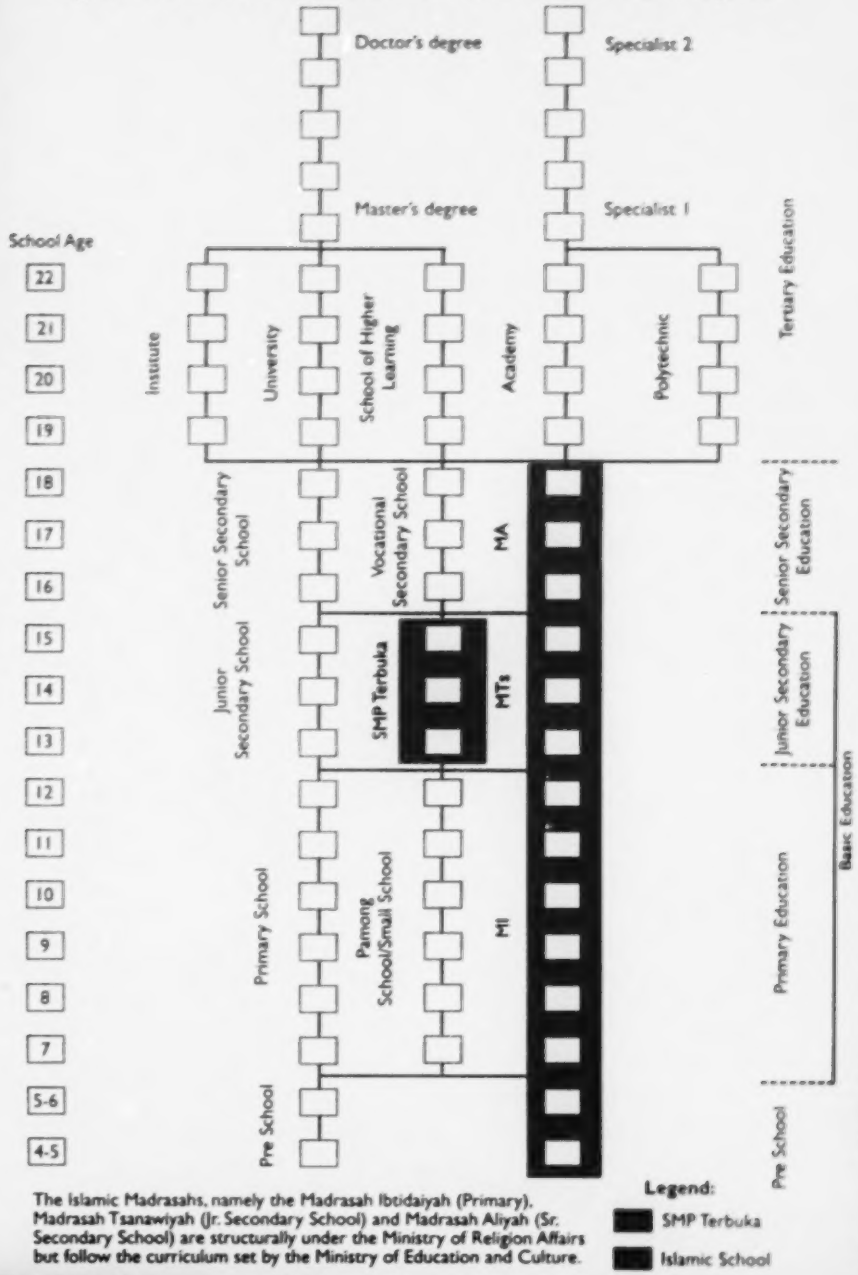
SMP Terbuka is part of the formal Indonesian school system, and its positioning within the system is illustrated in Figure 1.

The management of SMP Terbuka operates through a Directorate of General Secondary Education which is comprised of two task forces. The Development Task Force, based at the Center for Communication Technology for Education and Culture, or Pustekkom, is concerned with the development and production of masters for common learning materials as well as supporting media. The Management Task Force, based at Dikmenum, is concerned with the overall implementation and operation of the system.

In order for the whole system to operate smoothly, linkages have been established with appropriate agencies in other Ministries, such as the Ministry of Information (MOI), the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA).

At the central level, Pustekkom is required to establish linkages with the National Radio Station, the Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI). The National Television Network, Telvisi Republik Indonesia, arranges for air time, program scheduling, and the actual transmission. These two entities are under the jurisdiction of the MOI. Liaison with printing firms is carried out by Dikmenum annually, through a competitive bid-

Figure 1: Formal School Structure of National Education System



The Islamic Madrasahs, namely the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Primary), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Jr. Secondary School) and Madrasah Aliyah (Sr. Secondary School) are structurally under the Ministry of Religion Affairs but follow the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

ding process, for delivery of printed modules.

At the provincial level, SMP Terbuka is managed by a group responsible for the logistics, monitoring and distribution infrastructures. This group is referred to as the Local Technical Team, the Tim Teknis Daerah, which is located at and operates under the coordination of the District Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), or Kantor Wilayah Kabupaten Pedidikan dan Kebudayaan (Kandep Dikbud). The Tim Teknis Daerah distributes the learning materials, equipment and other related resources to recipient schools through the Unit Bantuan Belajar Siswa (UBB) which is under the sub-district office of the MOEC, or Kantor Wilayah Kecamatan Pendidkan dan Kebudayaan (Kancam Dikbud). When dealing with primary education issues, Kanwil Dikbud consults with the Provincial Education Service (Dinas P and K), a constituent body of MOHA under the Governor. This is because primary schools in Indonesia are academically under the MOEC, but administratively under the MOHA. The Islamic schools administratively and from the Islamic discipline perspective report to MORA. At the school level, the administrative and managerial responsibilities are in hands of the Principal of the base school who is assisted by the Vice-Principal and the subject teachers. These relationships are detailed in Figure 2.

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

Conceived in 1976, SMP Terbuka was not simply an attempt at political expediency. In fact, great effort has been made to stay true to the basic educational foundation and educational standards. In part, this is why the same national examination is required of all students, both those in the regular system and those who graduate through SMP Terbuka.

The SMP Terbuka system was designed to be dynamically responsive to development needs as well as compensatory in nature (Sadiman, Seligman, Rahardjo, 1995). As a result of the elementary schools construction project undertaken by Presidential mandate, called the Inpres School Project, which is part of the Primary Education Universalization drive, the Government of Indonesia projected explosive growth in the number of elementary school graduates from 1980 onward. SMP Terbuka was originally conceived and developed to address the educational needs of this group. Its main target was disadvantaged school-age children between the ages of 11 and 18, particularly those prevented by geographic or socioeconomic barriers from attending the regular SMP. With the introduction of the Universal Nine Year Basic Education (UBE) in 1994, entry priority is given to graduates 13 through 15 years of age of any recognized elementary school.

Originally experimental and small in scale, SMP Terbuka has always operated by making optimal, non-intrusive use of available resources. As early as 1985, studies indicated that it was a viable and acceptable alternative for students because it:

- made optimal use of local learning resources;
- overcame geographical and socioeconomic constraints making education more widely available;

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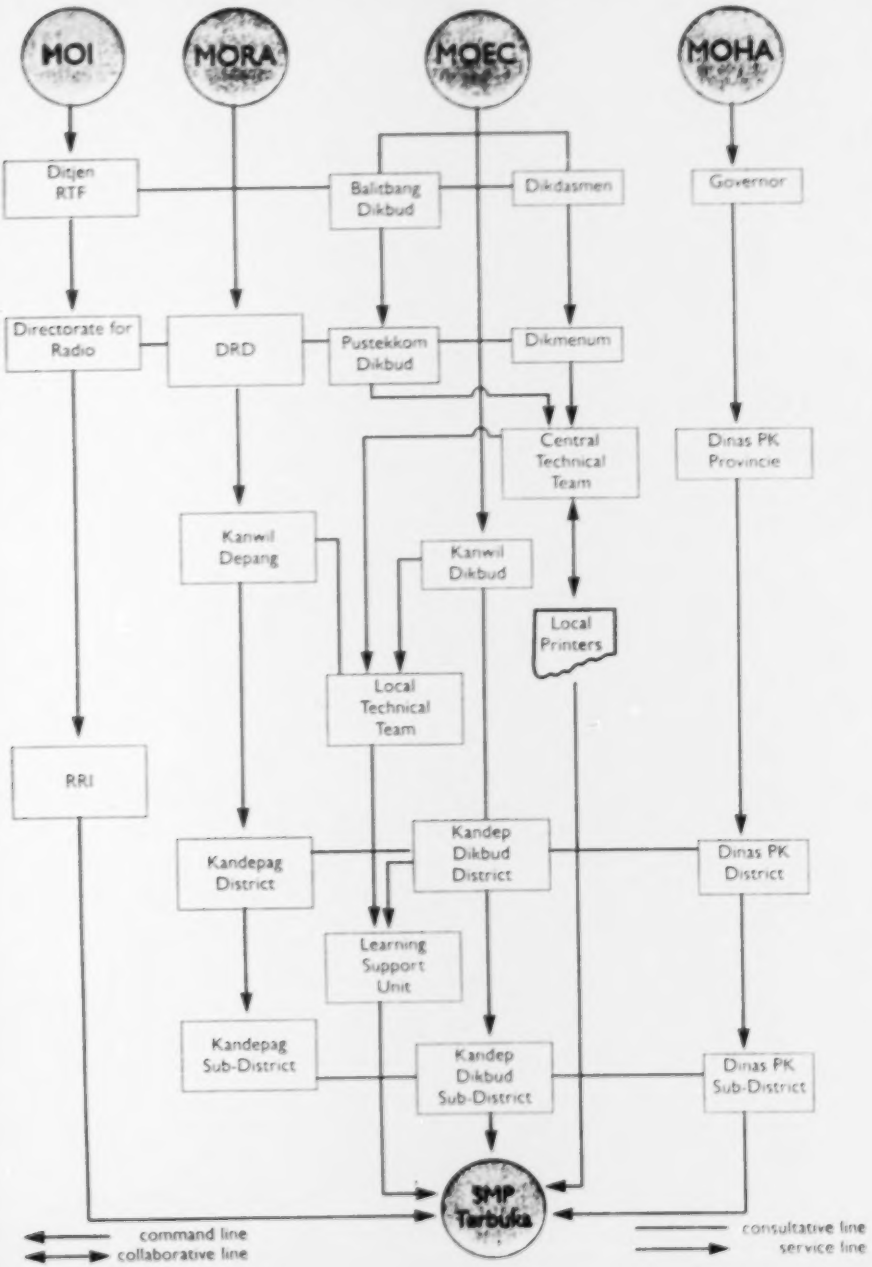
Figure 2: SMP Terbuka Operational Linkages



- helped cope with the shortage of classrooms and teachers;
- developed students' independent learning habits, a critical characteristic associated with lifelong learning opportunities;
- served students with different social and learning characteristics, thereby being inclusive rather than exclusive;
- helped cultivate the concept that learning can be ubiquitous and does not necessarily have to be confined to a school building (flexible learning); and
- operated at a fraction of the cost of the regular school system, thereby optimizing existing resources.

Most importantly, however, it had by this stage proven itself as a system that was based on and incorporated a sound theoretical foundation which produced skilled graduates every bit as capable as those studying in the more formal system. From an original base of 5 locations in just 5 provinces, it now operates with 956 locations in 27 provinces. Initially, this growth was relatively slow.

1990/91	15 locations in 9 provinces
1991/92	20 locations in 14 provinces
1992/93	25 locations in 19 provinces
1993/94	34 locations in 25 provinces

However, with the introduction of UBE, mandated by the President on National Education Day, May 2, 1994, the development accelerated.

1994/95	59 locations in 26 provinces (10,620 students enroled)
1995/96	356 locations in 27 provinces (64,080 students enroled)
1996/97	956 locations in 27 provinces (172,082 students enroled)

It is projected that by the end of the decade, there will be 3,270 SMP Terbuka locations with a total enrolment of 410,500 students. This number will increase dramatically as SMP Terbuka prepares to deal with 2.25 million students, its share of the 6.2 million students targeted by the UBE for the school year 2004/2005.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In reference to a World Bank study in 1993, Wardiman (1994) states that economic success in eight economies, including the three newly industrialized economies of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, is largely due to the effective development of physical and human capital and, more specifically, to the sharpened focus of human resource development towards vocational and technical education. In Indonesia, as in most developing economies, one of the most critical policy areas is ensuring that human resource development practices are aimed at building a skilled, flexible and technically capable workforce. This drive towards greater economic development and a technically capable workforce is focused first and foremost on primary and

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secondary school education levels. Clearly, this platform must exist before broader, higher education can take place. As Wardiman further points out, a survey of Asia described in *The Economist* (Asia Survey, 1993) notes that the successes enjoyed by East Asian countries in terms of strong economic development are directly attributed to the focus of educational resources on primary and secondary education rather than higher education, for it is this approach that has the greatest influence on the productivity of the mass of the workforce. In the case of Indonesia, it is this large scale workforce that will provide the economy with a comparative advantage, at least temporarily, in light manufacturing. The article further states that this approach to the development of an educational infrastructure will do more than anything else to promote income equality, consumer spending power, and broad support for high growth and pro-business policies. SMP Terbuka has excelled in the preparation of a technology-literate workforce.

SMP TERBUKA AS A PLATFORM FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 stipulates that "the proper goal of education is not to preserve a system but to enrich the lives of more people by providing more education of quality, more effectively, more quickly and at a cost the country can bear. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit." An educational system is but a means, not an end in itself. The accomplishments of SMP Terbuka in the realm of economic development must be understood to be part of broader strategic measures for the achievement of national development goals, one of which is to provide more lifelong learning opportunities of all kinds throughout the lifespan.

If, as Bishop (1989) contends, future trends in education include a move toward a more flexible, open and lifelong system of educational opportunities, other APEC economies may draw from the experience of SMP Terbuka. The evidence is abundant, the lessons are clear, and the results are substantial. Bishop (1989) also describes a number of specific pedagogical characteristics which he believes are linked to the future of learning and which are clearly represented by the SMP Terbuka system. For example, Bishop suggests learning opportunities must, in the future, be more flexible, diversified, and offer multiple entry points. The establishment of SMP Terbuka was based on just such a conceptual framework in the sense that it is dynamically responsive to an existing environment, local conditions and prevailing political climate (Sadiman, Seligman, Rahardjo, 1995). In addition, Bishop suggests the education systems of the future must be lifelong, or linked with lifelong learning opportunities. Presently, SMP Terbuka focuses on junior secondary school; however, it represents an educational philosophy and infrastructure which can support a host of lifelong learning opportunities, including basic literacy, upgrading, retraining and even craft and hobby pursuits. The essence of SMP Terbuka is flexibility, independent learning, and opportunity.

It is also suggested by Bishop (1989) that the world of education must link with

the world of work, and it must not be limited in time (the school stage) nor confined in space (the school building). SMP Terbuka is a system which, given the fact it doesn't have a fixed structure, can link directly with the world of work, now and in the future. It is not confined to buildings, nor is it limited to a certain time or stage in life. SMP Terbuka is positioned to provide equal learning opportunities for all people, irrespective of age, sex, previous educational achievement, or place of residence or income.

These properties strongly support the need for a paradigm shift with respect to our approaches towards learning. These changes will reflect the nature of the system described by Mukhopadhyay (1995) when he wrote of the need to move from conventional approaches to a more open system, utilizing distance delivery. Tied to this need are the opportunities which are now evolving from rapid developments in a host of computer-based learning technologies.

As Mason (1994) states, advancements in digitized interactive media and communications technologies are characterized by the very real potential to increase access to education and training, provide equality of opportunity between the educationally rich areas and the disadvantaged, furnish lifelong learning opportunities which are independent of time and place (networks, not buildings are the educational future), facilitate sharing of scarce resources, and prompt interactivity. Digitized interactive media, Internet communication networks and teleconferencing systems, for instance, offer innumerable alternative strategies for solving educational problems which require more flexibility, accessibility, and promptness of information irrespective of time and distance.

In fact, new technology in learning has been shown to provide cognitive benefits as well as to assist with the affective and motivational aspects of learning. SMP Terbuka currently achieves these goals; however, the notion of employing new technologies, hand-in-hand with the SMP Terbuka system, suggests a monumental opportunity to expand the influence and outcomes, perhaps even beyond the most optimistic visions that were proposed when the system was first introduced.

The SMP Terbuka experience has demonstrated that such learning can occur anywhere and that young children can be habituated to learn independently. As school-age children benefit from this reform, our attention should turn to the adult learners, making the dream of lifelong learning a reality.

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